

Pacific group intervention for the Minister of Health of Kiribati

For the opening plenary of the Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly

- Esteemed President,
- Director-General of the World Health Organization,
- Excellencies, honourable ministers and colleagues, warm Pacific greetings to you all.
- It is an honour to address you on behalf of 22 Pacific island countries and areas.
- We are pleased to announce that in October last year; after **reflecting on 30 years** of progress, Pacific health ministers came together and **endorsed the new Healthy Islands Vision 2050**.
- Climate change reminds us that human health and **planetary health** are inseparable. The Healthy Islands Vision 2050 is our response. It is our **shared commitment** to a more resilient and healthier Pacific and to deliver on the **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent**.

- The **Pacific Ocean** spans **a third of the earth's surface** and connects over twenty-five thousand islands. Kiribati alone is made up of 33 atolls and islands, dispersed across an ocean area larger than India, yet with a landmass no bigger than Singapore.
- Despite the vast distances between our islands, the vision weaves together our **shared identity** and our **interdependence**.
- Our journey towards 2050 can be likened to building and sailing the **Te Wa** – traditional canoe of Kiribati that has long connected people, enabling communication and survival.
- Te Wa is built **without screws or nails** but bound together by rope woven from coconut fibre – in **balance, trust, and shared purpose**. Its strength lies in how **all elements work together**.
- This is how our **health systems** and **partnerships** should be built. Bound together by trust and guided by shared purpose.
- As we sail forward, we call for continued strong in-country support from WHO, from our development partners, and from

our donors to strengthen the **Pacific health systems** and **workforce capacity**.

- As an example, this investment has supported Kiribati to pass a law in April to establish a **Health Promotion Foundation** to address noncommunicable diseases.
- Sisters and brothers, Te Wa is our canoe. We must all **take our oars, navigate together**, and ensure that our shared journey leads to health and dignity for generations to come.
- Let us embrace the spirit of **Reshaping Global Health: A Shared Responsibility as our call to action**. This means recognizing health impacts of climate change as a **global priority** and strengthening **solidarity** and **partnerships**, so that we remain united in facing defining challenges before us.
- As health leaders we can **reshape a world** where every island, every community, and everybody's health thrives. Kam rabwa.

Length: 403 words or approx. **3 mins**

Target length: 400 words or **3 mins**

Note that the time keeping at the WHA is very strict and speakers going over the allocated time will be cut off.